

notes digest

NJSBA Honors Chester Trustee as Board Member of the Year



Kerri Wright, a long-time member of the Chester Board of Education and a lawyer who specializes in education law and employment law, has been named the New Jersey School Boards Association's

2021-2022 Board Member of the Year.

Given annually since 2005, the award honors an individual board of education member who makes significant contributions to public education, exemplifies leadership in the field of education with a strong commitment to the children of New Jersey, demonstrates a strong commitment to personal and professional development as a board member and shows active involvement in school governance at the local, county and state levels.

NJSBA President Irene LeFebvre (last year's Board Member of the Year) and Executive Director Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod issued a joint statement, recognizing Wright's impressive record of service.

"Kerri Wright has dedicated her adult life to helping school boards make thoughtful decisions that promote student learning," they said. "As a board member and lawyer, she has been at the forefront of promoting effective school governance. Her contributions to the Chester Board of Education can best be described as simply amazing. We congratulate her on this honor!"

Asked about the award, Wright — who was educated in Chester Schools — called it a tribute to the "phenomenal education" provided by Chester and the wonderful people

dedicated to its students. "The length of my service on the Chester Board of Education and my drive to continue to serve is an outgrowth of the education we provide and my desire to continue to support that education and the creative initiatives that are implemented in our schools every day," she said.

Dr. Christina Van Woert, superintendent of Chester School District, a K-8 district, noted that Wright is widely admired not only for her unwavering commitment to the children of Chester but for her legal work on behalf of all New Jersey children. Wright is a principal attorney at Porzio, Bromberg & Newman P.C., which specializes in education, employment and labor, litigation, data privacy and cybersecurity.

"Ms. Wright's record of service, including in the areas of finance, curriculum and

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As the Election Nears, Voters Mull Candidates, Construction Projects and Other Questions

When voters go to the polls Tuesday, Nov. 2, most will have the opportunity to choose people who will serve on their local school boards.

In the majority of New Jersey school districts, the annual school election takes place in November. This year, 2,174 candidates are vying for 1,594 board of education positions on the ballot statewide. Incumbents make up about 47% of candidates and 684 seats are uncontested.

Ballot Questions

School boards may place special questions on the November election ballot, and this year at least nine districts did so.

- One district asked voters to approve spend-

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Thousands of School Officials Gear Up for Virtual Workshop 2021

Almost 5,000 school officials, school administrators, and educators from New Jersey school districts are gearing up to learn best practices at the New Jersey School Board Association's Virtual Workshop 2021, the largest training event for school officials in New Jersey.

The event will provide the necessary coaching and guidance to support districts in their efforts to remain nimble and handle today's complex tasks. The conference is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 26 to Thursday, Oct. 28.

"Virtual Workshop 2021 will be the networking and training event of the year," said NJSBA Executive Director Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod. "Don't miss this chance to learn from experts in the field and to join your friends and colleagues in an enlightening and engaging professional development opportunity for thousands of school leaders in the state."

Serving as the keynote speakers at the event are New Jersey Department of Education Acting Commissioner Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan; Alisha De Lorenzo, a former educator and wellness professional; and Maura Baker, the student representative to the State Board of Education.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

New Laws Establish Mental Health Grants, Promote STEM, Combat Food Insecurity

Gov. Phil Murphy recently signed the following education-related measures into law:

Student Depression Screenings

A-970/S-2259 (P.L. 2021, c. 237) Establishes the "Mental Health Screening in Schools Grant Program" in the New Jersey Department of Education. School districts would be able to apply for funding and resources to implement annual depression screening programs to identify students in grades seven through 12 who are at risk of depression. The bill places a variety of conditions on any school districts receiving a grant under the program.

The bill appropriates \$1 million to fund the grant program. The law will go into effect at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year.

Earlier versions of this legislation would have required all school boards to ensure that every student in grades seven through 12 receive an annual screening for depression. However, the bill was amended just before receiving final legislative approval to create this grant program instead of establishing a new mandate. NJSBA supported this revised, voluntary approach.

STEM Opportunities for Young Women and Minorities A-1625/S-2854 (P.L. 2021, c. 239) Aims to increase representation of young women and minorities in science, technology, engineering and math degree programs and careers.

As enacted, the measure directs the New Jersey Department of Education, in consultation with the federal Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology, to develop and administer an outreach program to encourage young women and minorities to

pursue post-secondary degrees and careers in STEM fields. For the purposes of this bill, the term STEM includes computer science, as well as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. NJSBA supported the measure.

Food Insecurity The following bills, which the NJSBA supported, are aimed at addressing food insecurity. The first two provide additional funds to school districts offering school meal programs:

- **A-5882/S-3943** (L. 2021, c. 246) Requires the state to provide a 10-cent per meal supplement to the existing federal reimbursement to operators of federal summer food service programs and the Seamless Summer Option. The Summer Food Service Program, administered by the state Department of Agriculture, provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to help children in low-income areas get the nutrition they need to learn, play and grow throughout the summer months when they are out of school. This law goes into effect June 1, 2022.
- **A-5883/S-3944** (L. 2021, c. 247) Requires the state to provide a 10-cent per breakfast supplement to the existing federal reimbursement to a school district with schools that participate in the federal school breakfast program by providing "breakfast after the bell." This law will take effect at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year.
- **A-5884/S-3945** (L. 2021, c. 242) Establishes a state "Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate" to improve access to food relief programs, develop new policy initiatives to combat hunger, and serve as an advocate for food insecure residents.

or a one-time increase in the district's tax levy.

There was one district with a tax levy question:

Greenwich (Warren County): The Greenwich Township Board of Education wants to raise an additional \$600,000 in tax levy funds to hire six teachers to maintain class sizes. Current class sizes and student programs are in jeopardy because the district needs six teachers to meet the needs of its current K-8 student population. Six teachers equate to approximately \$100 per \$100,000 assessed valuation (not market value).

Construction Proposals The annual school election also serves as one of five dates during the year when school boards may ask voters to approve school construction proposals. On Nov. 2, voters in four school districts will decide on proposed school construction referendums. Under the Educational Facilities and Construction and Financing Act of 2000, the state will fund at least 40% of eligible school construction costs through annual debt service aid.

Statewide amount proposed – \$118,703,688

State funding – \$38,601,249

Lenape Regional High School District (Burlington County): Various improvements, alterations, renovations and upgrades at Lenape High School, Shawnee High School, Cherokee High School, Seneca High School, the Administration Building, the warehouse building and the transportation building, including acquisition and installation of fixtures, furniture, equipment and any related site work.

Total amount: \$66,628,944

State funds: \$24,432,536

South Hunterdon Regional School District (Hunterdon County): The board is seeking to construct a new middle school to house grades 5 to 8 and to make comprehensive improvements to Lambertville Elementary School to provide upgraded facilities for its pre-K to grade four school building, including but not limited to HVAC, electric, plumbing, improvements to ancillary areas and construction of a new entry.

Total amount: \$33,412,944

State funds: \$6,703,993

Freehold Regional High School District (Monmouth County): The district is seeking approval to repair and to replace selected roofs and to

Ballot Questions

continued

ing outside of the state's 2% tax levy cap.

- Four school boards are conducting bond referendums asking voters to approve borrowing for school construction or renovation projects. Construction proposals total \$118,703,688 million statewide.
- Four boards of education have other ques-

tions, including proposals to change from an appointed to an elected board; to reduce the size of the board of education or to expand the size of their board.

Tax Levy Questions

School boards may place questions on the November ballot, asking voters to approve spending outside of the state's 2% tax levy cap. The question must state if the additional revenue sought would represent a permanent

repave and to repair selected drives and parking lots at Colts Neck High School, Freehold Borough High School, Freehold Township High School, Howell High School, Manalapan High School and Marlboro High School, including any related site work.

Total amount: \$14,460,000

State funds: \$5,784,000

Hamburg Borough Board of Education (Sussex County): The board of education is seeking to provide for renovations, alterations and improvements at Hamburg Borough Elementary School, including acquisition and installation of fixtures and equipment, site work and related costs. The board is authorized to transfer funds among the purposes approved at this annual election.

Total amount: \$4,201,800

State funds: \$1,680,720

Other Ballot Questions

In four districts, voters will act on questions related to school board composition and board type.

Greenwich Township (Cumberland County)

The Greenwich Township Board of Education is asking voters if it should decrease the number of members from the current nine-member board of education to a seven-member board.

Port Republic (Atlantic County) The board is asking voters if it should change to a Type II elected board with five members from being a Type I district with members of the board of education appointed by the mayor, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:9-4.

Edgewater Borough (Bergen County) The Edgewater School District Board of Education is asking if it should increase the size of its board from five members to seven members to better serve the community by having a greater and more diverse group of representatives.

Montclair (Essex County) The Montclair Township School District has a question on the ballot asking voters if it should be reclassified from a Type I School District, with members of the Board of Education appointed by the mayor, to a Type II school district, with members of the Board of Education elected by township voters during regularly-scheduled annual November elections, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:9-4. 🍎

Virtual Workshop 2021 continued

Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan took the helm at the state Department of Education in October 2020, after being nominated by Gov. Phil Murphy. She began her 25-year career in education as a substitute teacher in Essex County and taught in East Orange Public Schools before she launched the Marion P. Thomas Charter School in Newark. She has led schools, districts, a county education department, and even has served as a college board of trustee. She is scheduled to deliver her keynote address on the final day of Workshop at 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 28.

Virtual Workshop also will present special events and entertainment, networking opportunities, and an interactive exhibit hall with vendors that cater to school districts.

Brand new sessions will cover digital and distance learning, equity, cybersecurity, cost-savings, school finance and shared services. Leadership best practices, school technology, social and emotional learning, sustainability, and integrative STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math) are among the other planned sessions.

The virtual conference has been reimagined for the second consecutive year to provide New Jersey school leaders with a path forward to address the near- and long- term effects of the pandemic on our shared educational system.

This year, all attendees will be able to view Virtual Workshop sessions on demand for 30 days after the event. That will allow everyone to attend every single session of interest — even if it was scheduled at the same time as another session that demanded your attention.

To learn more, visit workshop.njsba.org.

Virtual Workshop Login Reminder Virtual Workshop registrants must login with the email address that was used in the registration process for successful sign-in to the event.



NJDOE Releases Extensive Online Resources to Teach about Climate Change

Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, New Jersey schools will become the first in the nation to incorporate climate change curriculum into K-12 classrooms — and now school districts and educators can take advantage of extensive online resources to carry out that mission, thanks to the New Jersey Department of Education.

The NJDOE's Climate Change webpage at <https://www.nj.gov/education/standards/climate> provides:

- Instructional resources, such as webinars, instructional strategies, literature and standards-based lessons — by grade level and by subject.
- Links, videos, highlights and news stories to innovative lessons on climate change occurring in New Jersey schools.
- Activities and projects for students in and out of the classroom.
- Opportunities for students to take part in community engagement.
- A portal for educators and other stakehold-

ers to share their stories, feedback and resources.

“New Jersey’s groundbreaking academic standards, and the accompanying resources that we are releasing today, will give educators, parents, and other stakeholders greater tools and information on the impacts of climate change,” said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, acting commissioner of education. “Students throughout New Jersey will enhance their understanding of how climate change poses a threat to our environment, and actions necessary to mitigate the threat.”

Thought Leader Committee on Climate Change

The New Jersey School Boards Association, in partnership with Sustainable Jersey, is leading a Thought Leader Committee on Climate Change, which is discussing what educators need to teach the subject of climate change to students in grades K-12. The group will be releasing a white paper on the topic in coming weeks. 🍎

From 'Dreamer' to New Jersey's Teacher of the Year



Theresa Maughan, a high school social studies teacher at the East Orange STEM Academy in the East Orange School District, has been named 2021-2022 New Jersey

State Teacher of the Year, the New Jersey Department of Education announced Oct. 6.

"An extraordinary teacher is a lifelong learner who seeks creative ways to engage students and help them overcome obstacles. These qualities are exemplified by Theresa Maughan — this year's New Jersey State Teacher of the Year," said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Maughan got an inkling that she wanted to be an educator in seventh grade, when her social studies teacher, Mrs. Roman, organized a letter-writing campaign to her class's congressional representative. The effort sought to prevent Maughan from being deported.

That was after Maughan realized she was a "Dreamer" — a child brought to the United States without documentation. She immigrated to the U.S. from Belize with her parents, who remained in the country after their visas expired.

Becoming an American Citizen As a result of her teacher's efforts, Maughan and her family went through the naturalization process and became American citizens. "My teacher ignited our class with the realization that we could take our civics lessons and use them in real-life situations," Maughan said.

A few years later, Maughan became "teacher for the day" when her social studies class reenacted the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson.

"I was hooked," she said. "Even though I had considered a career as an immigration lawyer to help people experiencing what I went through in the seventh grade, I knew that a career in teaching would provide me with the best opportunity to fulfill my commitment to work for change."

Maughan's students have won numerous honors, including Black History Month essay contests sponsored by the New Jersey Bar

Association and the New Jersey Department of State Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Commission essay contest; they also were finalists in the National History Day competition.

"I am honored to recognize Theresa Maughan for her commitment to her students and dedication to the teaching profession," said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, acting commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education. "The Department of Education looks forward to working with Theresa as we strive to continually enhance education throughout the state."

In her role as State Teacher of the Year, Maughan will work with the New Jersey Department of Education and give presentations to colleagues and stakeholders around the state, speak with aspiring teachers and visit classrooms to promote diversity in the teacher workforce and continual educational improvement. She will also participate in national conferences with other state teachers of the year. Additional information can be found on the Governor's Educator of the Year webpage at www.nj.gov/education/recognition/educators/geoy/. 🍏

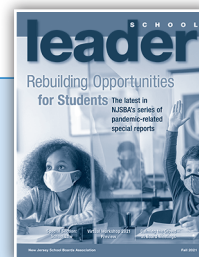
Voters Approve \$52M in Spending Proposals

On Tuesday, Sept. 28, voters in four New Jersey school districts approved spending proposals totaling \$51,969,253, including state funding of \$21,575,283.

Districts had proposed spending \$96,620,339, with \$41,228,690 coming from state funding.

The following is a recap of the results.

- Voters in the Wenonah School District approved the Board of Education's proposal for renovations, alterations and improvements at Wenonah Elementary-Middle School.
- Mine Hill's voters narrowly approved its request to implement various improvements, alterations, renovations and upgrades at Canfield School.
- Wallkill Valley Regional High School



School Leader Features Strategies for Calming a Crowd, Shares New NJSBA Report

The latest issue of *School Leader* magazine is online at www.njsba.org/news-information/school-leader — and features a timely article on strategies for handling contentious school board meetings.

The article, "Calming the Crowd" suggests strategies on controlling expectations, acknowledging the crowd and the emotion, and handling the public comment period.

A piece on the fifth in the Association's series of reports during the pandemic, "Rebuilding Opportunities for Students," is the cover story. The report looks at challenges facing school districts, and provides information on effective practices and programs, meeting the needs of special populations, the role of arts education in social-emotional learning, and directing coronavirus relief funding so that it has the optimal impact on growth and learning for students.

School Leader is published quarterly, and mails to all school board members, superintendents and business administrators in the state.

District voters overwhelmingly approved a proposal to undertake improvements to the Wallkill Valley High School.

- In Rahway, voters approved proposal number one but rejected proposals two and three for school capital projects.

School districts in New Jersey can only hold elections on ballot questions on dates specified by law. These dates are the final Tuesday in September, the second Tuesday in December, the fourth Tuesday in January, the second Tuesday in March and the Annual School Election on the third Tuesday in April. Under the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, the state will fund at least 40% of eligible school construction costs through annual debt service aid. Proposed construction projects in all four school districts are at least partially eligible for state funds. 🍏

Board Member of the Year

continued

instruction, has led to the many endless and creative opportunities we have for the children of Chester,” Van Woert said. “Her impact can be felt on the manner in which our district is a leader in technology implementation, social and emotional learning, and professional development. What is most important is that

Wright is an expert on reconfiguring school districts ...

all of these areas and tenets lead to a powerful educational experience for our students — and Kerri Wright is one of the premier drivers of that experience as a board member of 14 years.”

Wright served the Chester Board of Education as vice president from 2010-2012, as president from 2013-2015 and as chair of its Negotiations Committee for 14 years. She was elected to the board in 2007 and is an NJSBA certified board member.

Wright is an expert on reconfiguring school districts, including the creation and dissolution of regional school districts and the creation and termination of sending-receiving relationships. She has significant experience representing and counseling school boards, charter schools, private schools and colleges in a variety of areas. She has written numerous articles to help guide and assist school boards in their decision making.

Wright graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Seton Hall University, where she also earned a Master of Public Administration. She earned a Juris Doctor degree from Emory University School of Law. She has written articles for numerous publications, including NJSBA's *School Leader*; *Corporate Counsel Law* and *New Jersey Law Journal*.

Wright will be featured in a future issue of *School Leader* magazine. 🍎

Get the Full Story Online

The print edition of *School Board Notes Digest* is published monthly, and it includes condensed versions of articles that have appeared in the weekly online version of the newsletter. The current issue is available at www.njsba.org/sbn. Follow links on that page to view archived editions.

Joint Committee of the Public Schools Holds Hearing on School Reopenings

On Tuesday, Oct. 19, the Joint Committee of the Public Schools convened a hearing to receive testimony from various invited guests on the issue of school reopening. Co-chaired by Sen. Ronald Rice and Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, the Joint Committee is a bicameral, bipartisan legislative body that provides an ongoing study of the system of free public schools, its financing, administration and operations, as well as to make recommendations for legislative action.

The New Jersey School Boards Association was invited to testify and was represented by Jonathan Pushman, director of governmental relations. In testimony to the committee, Pushman and other stakeholders highlighted challenges school districts have been facing since schools opened for full-time, in-person instruction last month, such as staffing shortages and the toll the pandemic has taken on the physical and mental health of students and staff. They also expressed collective support for ways the legislature can assist school districts once the Senate and Assembly return from recess following the November election. These include:

- Advocating for the federal government to ease Commercial Driver License requirements to help alleviate the shortage of school bus drivers.
- Flexibility around the 2% property tax levy cap for districts losing state aid or as necessary to procure COVID-related expenses.
- Repeal of the state residency requirement for newly hired public employees, including school staff, to increase the pool of potential job applicants.
- Legislation to allow retired teachers to return to the classroom, on at least a temporary basis, to fill staff vacancies.
- Relief from the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum monitoring system in the current school year.
- Streamlining the teacher certification process without sacrificing quality.
- Directing at least a portion of billions of unallocated funds the state received through the federal American Rescue Plan

to local school districts.

- Avoiding the imposition of any additional mandates that will unnecessarily interfere with district operations during these challenging times.

Pushman also spent time highlighting the findings and recommendations of the NJSBA's most recent report on education during the pandemic — “Rebuilding Opportunities for Students.”

Other stakeholders from the K-12 education community who provided testimony included representatives of the New Jersey Education Association, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, Garden State Coalition of Schools, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, and the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association. 🍎

State Board of Education Recognizes Principals Month, Tackles Bilingual Education

At its October meeting, the New Jersey State Board of Education heard updates and acted on the following items:

- **Resolution in honor of National Principals Month in the State of New Jersey** The board passed a resolution recognizing October as National Principals Month. The state board recognized principals for their tireless efforts to “establish the academic tone, missions, and visions for their schools, collaborate with teachers to implement and maintain rigorous curricula, and set ambitious performance goals.”
- **Bilingual education** The board began discussions on updates to the regulations concerning bilingual education. Specifically, the board discussed amending the process for identifying an eligible English language learner to ensure districts use a “multi-step process” at the time of enrollment, which includes administering the statewide home-language survey instead of a district-selected screener, conducting a records review and other changes. The amendments are designed to align with federal requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

NJSBA Board of Directors Highlights

The NJSBA Board of Directors met virtually Friday, Oct. 1, 2021. President Irene LeFebvre presided over the meeting from the Association's headquarters in Trenton. Immediate Past President Mike McClure participated in the meeting from Association headquarters. Vice Presidents Tammeisha D. Smith and Dr. Karen Cortellino participated virtually. Vice President Bruce Young was not present. Executive Director Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod provided his report to the board from headquarters.

Action Items: The Board of Directors approved the following items:

1. Extension of payment of dues for Board of Director members' boards.
2. Annual ACES grant request from Education Leadership Foundation of New Jersey.
3. Open session minutes of the May 7, 2021, meeting.
4. Closed session minutes of the May 7, 2021, meeting.
5. NJSBA legislative committee appointments.
6. NJSBA resolution subcommittee appointments.

Executive Director's Report Dr. Feinsod addressed NJSBA activities, and the progress made in enabling school districts to meet the challenges presented by the public health crisis, ensuring that members continue to benefit from essential training, advocacy, and direct service.

NJSBA's Newest Pandemic Report Last month, NJSBA released its latest study on education during the pandemic titled "Rebuilding Opportunities for Students," its fifth since the pandemic began. The report looks at the challenges facing school districts and students in dealing with pandemic-related gaps in academic and social-emotional learning, and provides information on effective practices and programs.

Labor Management Collaborative On Sept. 8, the U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and the president of the National Education Association, Becky Pringle, visited the Delran School District in Burlington County to learn more about the New Jersey Public Schools Labor Management Collaborative, which NJSBA helped establish. The initiative encourages the collaboration between management and labor to positively impact student achievement.

Legislative Update In mid-August, LeFebvre, Dr. Feinsod, and Director of Governmental Relations Jonathan Pushman attended a virtual meeting facilitated by the National School Boards Association with U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.

President LeFebvre and Dr. Feinsod also participated in a meeting with New Jersey Senators Steve Sweeney and M. Teresa Ruiz, along with the leadership of the other education associations and unions to discuss the federal stimulus money.

There also was discussion of two significant pieces of legislation that have been enacted since the last NJSBA Board of Directors meeting in May. The Special Education 'Aging Out' Bill (S-3434/A-5366) was signed in June. NJSBA originally had concerns about the funding for this bill, however, it successfully obtained amendments to provide for funding. In addition, amendments to Chapter 44 (A-5825/A-3487) were enacted in early July. Among the provisions of this law is the requirement that boards and unions engage in negotiations to "substantially mitigate" any financial losses resulting from the implementation of Chapter 44, the law that addressed school employees' health benefits coverage and payment obligations.

Hybrid County Meetings NJSBA rolled out its hybrid county meetings this summer. These hybrid meetings are designed to accommodate members who would like to be present in-person at meetings, as well as those who prefer to attend virtually. Virtual county meetings will be held in January and February to allow the counties to gather without worrying about rescheduling due to weather and any other possible issues.

Member Engagement Since March 2020, the NJSBA website has received more than 1.7 million views; the Facebook page has more than 5,300 followers, which represents an increase of 67% since March 2020, and approximately 100 Facebook Live programs were presented. In the 18 months since the pandemic started, NJSBA has hosted 99 webinars, with 3,200 live attendees, and 2,200 attendees viewing the program recording later. NJSBA's podcasts, Conversations on New Jersey Education, has had more than 300,000 views.

The NJSBA Strategic Plan Several planning sessions have been held. The completed plan will be presented to the Board of Directors at its Friday, Nov. 19 meeting.

Return to Headquarters On Oct. 4, all staff returned to the NJSBA headquarters in Trenton. The Association will operate on a hybrid schedule with all employees in the building Monday through Wednesday for "Collaboration Days," with most working remotely on Thursdays and Fridays. A small number of employees will be in the headquarters office five days a week.

NJSBA Honors 4 Districts with School Leader Awards

Innovative programs in four New Jersey school districts have earned recognition in the New Jersey School Boards Association's 35th annual School Leader Awards.

"This year, the School Leader Awards showcased creative and effective programs that New Jersey schools are using to meet the challenges of remote learning created by the COVID-19 school closure," said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, NJSBA executive director. "Entries were judged on their level of innovation, and how well their programs met students' needs in a remote learning environment. Congratulations to all involved for successfully serving their students during this difficult time."

This year, the judges of the 2021 School Leader Award program selected one school district for exemplary program recognition and three recognized programs, out of 15 entries.

Award winners will be honored at a ceremony during one of their respective county school boards association meetings later this year. The winners are:

Hamilton Township School District: Extra-curricular Responses for Students, Families and the Community During Remote Learning (Exemplary Program) District personnel designed and delivered a three-pronged, extracurricular response to address the needs of 11,600 students while they were physically out of school and learning remotely. The district committed to addressing food insecurity, health and safety issues, and internet connectivity. Many of these interventions remain in place.

Brick Township School District: BTPS Brick-n-Click Safe Restart Plan for Teaching & Learning & Summer SPARK (Recognized Program) The goal was to create a program of blended instruction to bridge the gap between face-to-face and virtual instruction, engaging learners and challenging them with relevant and rigorous tasks. The program kept students and staff healthy and safe while providing high-quality instruction in a flexible and fluid learning environment.

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New Jersey Department of Health Directive to Require Weekly COVID Data Reporting

New Jersey schools must provide weekly reports on COVID-19 infections among staff and students and immunization rates starting Oct. 26 to comply with an executive directive issued by the New Jersey Department of Health.

"This reporting will give us a more complete picture of the cases and vaccination rates among students and staff, which we can then report to you," Gov. Phil Murphy said at an Oct. 6 coronavirus briefing with the media.

The Oct. 7 directive follows Executive Order 253, which was issued Aug. 23 and requires all school employees be vaccinated by Oct. 18 or be tested at least once a week. The governor also has mandated that everyone wear masks in school buildings.

As schools implement COVID-19 testing, the data "will provide insight on the circulation of the virus among schoolchildren and school staff," said Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli. "This data, however, is not a reflection of the cases that are linked to in-school transmission, which is captured through the outbreak reports."

Under the directive, all school districts must report testing data to the communicable disease reporting surveillance system, Persichilli said. "The cases reported to the department include any testing conducted by the schools, their testing vendors, and cases reported to the schools by parents, students and staff. The aggregate reporting does not replace the requirement that testing administrators report individual COVID-19 test results to their local public health authorities."

The directive will identify the cadence of screening/testing in the schools based on the prevalence of the disease in a particular region using COVID-19 Activity Level Index scores, Persichilli said. "We're also comparing that to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) scores, and that will identify the cadence of the testing, whether it's once a week or twice a week, and that will be laid out for the schools," she explained.

Schools also will report aggregate vaccination data on staff and students to the department, Persichilli said. "The department will

collect the information, analyze it for trends, and when we have complete data, we will share it in an aggregate form on our dashboard. Layered strategies of testing, vaccination for those who are eligible, masking, physical distance, handwashing, and staying home when you're sick are the best tools for keeping our schools and communities safe for in-person activities."

During the media briefing, Murphy clarified that Executive Order 253 requiring all school staff to be either fully vaccinated by Oct. 18 or face regular COVID-19 testing includes bus drivers — "regardless of whether they're district employees or independently contracted," he said. "We're doing all we can to ensure that the school day is as safe as possible for all of our kids, and that commitment begins at the bus stop." 🍏

NJSBA Delegate Assembly: Registration Now Open

The New Jersey School Boards Association will hold its semiannual Delegate Assembly on Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021. The meeting will be held through NJSBA's official virtual conference platform, Swoogo.

Delegates, as well as non-voting board members and guests, can now register to attend on the NJSBA website through the member portal. All board members are welcome and encouraged to attend, but only those designated by their board of education to serve as a voting delegate should register as such.

The Delegate Assembly meets twice a year to set policies that determine NJSBA's position on educational issues and establish bylaws that govern its operations. Each board of education in the state is entitled to one voting delegate.

The tentative agenda includes a report from the NJSBA President Irene LeFebvre and NJSBA Executive Director Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod. Also on the agenda is the sunset review of Sections 3000 (Business & Noninstructional Operations) and 4000 (Instructional

Governor Approves Two Education Measures

On Friday, Sept. 24, Gov. Phil Murphy acted on a handful of bills. Among the education-related measures he approved is one that is aimed at reducing teacher shortages. Another is designed to protect students who suffer head injuries and ensure their safe return to school and other activities.

'Limited' Teacher Certification Pilot S-2826/A-4594 directs the New Jersey Department of Education to establish a five-year pilot program for the issuance of limited certificates of eligibility with advanced standing and limited certificates of eligibility. The "limited CEAS" and "limited CE" would be available to candidates who may not meet one of the general requirements for a CEAS or CE and are seeking employment in a school, such as the minimum GPA requirement or the requirement to achieve a passing score on a subject matter test.

Those who hold a limited CEAS or limited CE only would be eligible for employment at school districts approved by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Concussion Protocol Under S-225/A-679, student athletes who have sustained a concussion would be prohibited from returning to competition until they have returned to regular school activities and are symptom-free. The return of the student athlete or cheerleader would be in accordance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's graduated, six-step "Return to Play Progression" recommendations. This builds upon existing law stipulating that a student-athlete must be evaluated by, and receive written clearance from, a physician or health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions to return to competition or practice.

& Support Personnel) of the NJSBA Manual of Positions and Policies on Education. The Association did not receive any resolutions from local boards of education prior to the Sept. 16, 2021, submission deadline.

In keeping with NJSBA's technology vision, this year, the NJSBA Delegate Assembly Handbook will be provided to every delegate in a digital format. All meeting materials, including the handbook, will also be placed on the NJSBA Delegate Assembly webpage and the Swoogo conference platform prior to the meeting.

For registration questions, email the NJSBA Call Center at callcenter@njsba.org. 🍏



NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Headquarters: 413 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08618
Telephone: 1-888-88NJSBA • Website: www.njsba.org

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Irene LeFebvre, *president*
Lawrence S. Feinsod, Ed.D., *executive director*

SCHOOL BOARD NOTES

Janet Bamford, chief public affairs officer
Thomas Parmalee, managing editor
Stacy Moorhead, graphic design specialist
Adriana DiGiacomantonio, manager, graphic design

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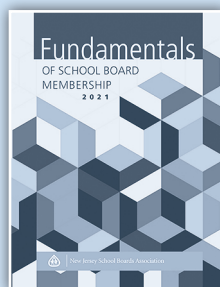
New Edition of

***Fundamentals of School Board Membership* Is Available**

NJSBA's anthology on the basics of board membership, *Fundamentals of School Board Membership* is now available electronically for free to members through the password-protected portal of the NJSBA website at www.njsba.org/news-information/publications-and-resources.

The book is ideal for new members, who may have questions about the roles and responsibilities of board of education trustees. For veteran board members, *Fundamentals of School Board Membership* can be a continuing reference on effective school board governance.

Fundamentals includes articles on topics ranging from board-superintendent relations and tips for new board members, to the board's role in curriculum, finance, policy and more. The publication also includes a glossary of education terms and acronyms.



School Leader Award Winners

continued

Brick Township School District: Special Education (Recognized Program) During the pandemic, the Brick Township School District Special Services Department used all available resources to best meet the needs of students

with disabilities. The Brick Township Special Education program assessed what students were missing and what needed to be provided.

The district made plans for students to receive additional services, proactively sought opportunities to provide students with compensatory education services and reviewed student data, communicating with parents and actively

fulfilling students' needs.

Ocean Township School District — The History of Dating: A Theatrical Movie Production (Recognized Program) To successfully address the challenges of remote learning created by the COVID-19 school closure, the Ocean Township High School found new, creative ways to showcase high school theatre arts during a pandemic. The program involved finding a show that could be staged outdoors with minimal scenery and could easily translate to film. The students and their advisers spent four months putting together a movie adaptation of Brian D. Taylor's comedy, *The History of Dating*. The movie was shown in a drive-in movie format in the parking lot of the Ocean Township Intermediate School in February 2021.

School Leader Award entries were judged by representatives of the New Jersey School Boards Association, New Jersey Association of School Administrators and New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. 🍎